

ASSISTANT CURATOR OF OTTOMAN, MIDDLE-EASTERN AND ASIAN
ARMS AND ARMOUR (Full-time)
Fixed-Term Contract: Three Years

THE ARMS AND ARMOUR COLLECTION

The arms and armour collection at the Wallace Collection consists of over 2,000 works of art, around 65% of which is European, with the rest originating in many different parts of the world, predominantly the Middle East, Iran and India. Arms and armour numerically accounts for 44% of the Wallace Collection's total holdings, forming what is generally acknowledged to be one of the most important collections of arms and armour in the world and the major general collection of such material in London.

The European arms and armour, almost all of which was acquired by Sir Richard Wallace, is an important surviving example of the 19th-century passion for collecting arms and armour. The collection is very diverse, ranging in date from c. 800-1860, with the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance being key focuses. It is especially strong in German and Italian armour and weapons of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The Oriental Armoury, assembled largely by Sir Richard Wallace in the lifetime of his father, the 4th Marquess of Hertford, also contains many pieces of international significance. The collection is especially strong in Indo-Iranian and Ottoman material and includes such individual masterpieces as swords, daggers and armour associated with Shah Jahan (1592-1666), Safdar Jang (1707-54), Fath-Ali Shah (1772-1834) and Ranjit Singh (1780- 1839). It has been much less thoroughly studied than the European parts of the collection, with the only catalogue (essentially a summary hand-list) by Sir Guy Laking, published as long ago as 1914. The Ottoman, Middle-Eastern and Asian (OMEA) Catalogue Project (2005-2022) seeks to address this notable gap in our understanding of the Wallace Collection, through a major programme of documentation, conservation, photography and provenance research, to result in a full catalogue of this important collection which it is intended to redisplay in a completely refurbished Oriental Armoury.

OVERALL PURPOSE AND ROLE

This is a new post intended to strengthen the curatorial team but also to provide a professional opportunity for someone intending to make a career in arms and armour curatorship. It is envisaged as an early stage career post for someone with a good existing knowledge of arms and armour, especially Ottoman and Indo-Iranian weapons, and some experience of museum work. Formal training in art history is essential.

Primarily this post is designed to encourage an early-stage researcher to develop a more advanced specialism in non-European arms and armour, producing new research while also helping to deliver both the Catalogue of Ottoman, Middle-Eastern and Asian Arms and Armour and the re-displayed Oriental Armoury. As part of a small curatorial team, working closely with and reporting to the Curator of Arms and Armour, the post-holder will also have direct involvement in activities connected with the care and presentation of the collections. You will have the opportunity to undertake research, to mount small displays and to write for the public articles and other material relating to the collection. You will be encouraged to build professional networks within the sector and will assist our Development Department where appropriate.

The post-holder will be directly involved with the exhibition, *Forgotten Masterpieces of Indian Painting for the East India Company* which is due to open at the Wallace Collection in September 2019. Curated by renowned writer and historian William Dalrymple, the exhibition will give the post-holder the opportunity to help link some of the objects in the permanent collection to the exhibition and to help with the associated programming such as a gallery trail and public talks.

On occasions the post-holder may also be required to carry out a range of duties covering for Curatorial Assistants.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Assistant Curator of OMEA Arms and Armour will have a strong interest in and some established knowledge of non-European arms and armour, especially Ottoman, Indian and Iranian weapons. Success in the post will to a large extent be measured by the degree to which the Assistant Curator successfully contributes to the completion of the OMEA catalogue and the redisplay of the Oriental Armoury. At the beginning of his/her contract a programme of work will be agreed with the Curator of Arms and Armour and the Head of the Curatorial Department.

The following are the main elements of the job:

- Facilitating the progress of the OMEA catalogue to completion; this work will include editing, correction, and formatting of the catalogue entries written between 2014 and 2018 by external authors.
- Developing the new displays to be installed in the refurbished Oriental Armoury.
- Being the in-house curatorial contact for the *Forgotten Masterpieces* exhibition, helping to provide information and interpretation where appropriate and facilitating the integration of Wallace Collection objects as necessary
- Assisting in further establishing the Wallace Collection as an important centre for the study of OMEA arms and armour.
- Contributing to the development of the Wallace Collection's online resources for OMEA arms and armour, including the Museum Plus collections

management system and 'Wallace Live', the museum's publicly accessible online database.

- Organizing (sometimes in conjunction with the Education Department) conferences, study days and colloquia on OMEA arms and armour.
- Giving gallery talks and other public lectures.

The Assistant Curator of OMEA Arms and Armour will also take pride in the presentation of the collections and their good care to the standards expected of a national museum. Flexibility and a willingness to tackle any reasonable task will be an essential element of the job. The Assistant Curator will ensure that the works of art and the galleries look as perfect as possible, and that problems identified during gallery checks are followed up effectively.

The Assistant Curator will be required to cover for the Curatorial Assistant from time to time and will be expected to undertake all the elements of that role. These include checking the Galleries on a daily basis, organizing and coordinating cleaning and remedial work, producing signage and labels, helping with conferences and evening events (presence at commercial events attracts overtime payments), assisting with object moves in Galleries and for exhibitions and displays, and undertaking administrative tasks.

The Assistant Curator of OMEA Arms and Armour may be required to carry out other duties from time to time.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Curator of Arms and Armour
Senior Curator
Curators and Librarians
Head of Conservation and Conservation Department
Collections Officer
Development Department
Photographer
Education Department

REPORTING STRUCTURE

Curator of Arms and Armour

SKILLS QUALIFICATIONS

- A relevant post-graduate level degree
- A demonstrable research interest relevant to historic Ottoman, Middle-Eastern and Asian art and material culture, and some professional experience in this field.

- Strong hands-on experience of arms and armour, including an awareness of relevant constructional and decorative techniques, styles, materials, etc.
- Proven written and oral skills
- A knowledge of Arabic and other relevant languages is desirable
- Demonstrable organisational skills
- Competence in IT, and some familiarity with museum works of art databases
- Flexibility and the ability to balance a busy work-load with a number of given projects and deadlines

PERSON SPECIFICATION

- A passion for works of art and an appreciation of the Wallace Collection and its collections
- Academic curiosity
- Attention to detail
- A high level of self-motivation
- The ability to integrate well with colleagues in a small team
- The ability to communicate well with people, including Collection staff, visiting scholars, outside contractors and members of the public
- The ability to work effectively and efficiently under pressure
- A clear communication style
- An appreciation of the role of a national museum, especially its need to balance the care of the works of art with service to its public

REMUNERATION AND WORKING HOURS

The salary for this post is circa £23,000 to £25,000 per annum, according to experience. In addition, the postholder will receive 25 days paid annual leave (plus 2.5

'privilege' days), and membership of an occupational pension scheme. An interest-free season ticket loan is available (after six months service).

For this post, the normal working week is a five-day week, Monday to Friday. The normal working day will be 9am to 5pm. However, some flexibility will be expected as occasionally the need to participate in specialist conferences or wider museum activities will arise. Some evening work will also be required, for example attendance at events held in the Wallace Collection (for which overtime payments will be made).

Deadline for applications: 9 December 2018

Date of first interviews: 20 December 2018

The Wallace Collection, Hertford House, Manchester Square, London, W1U 3BN
www.wallacecollection.org; t: 020 7563 9544

An application form can be found and downloaded from our website www.wallacecollection.org. Alternatively, you can write to the HR Department, The Wallace Collection, Hertford House, Manchester Square, London, W1U 3BN for a postal application pack.

If you have not heard from us within four weeks of the closing date, please assume that you have not been shortlisted for interview on this occasion.

The Wallace Collection is an equal opportunities employer